

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am signing SB 1356 having heard from many individuals and groups involved in domestic violence cases.

Some have argued that incarceration of domestic violence victims is an important tool in compelling victims to testify. However, I believe that the victims in these cases have suffered enough and that the decision to testify in these types of cases should be made by the individuals most impacted by these crimes.

SB 1356 ensures that victims of domestic violence have the same statutory protections as sexual assault victims and exempts them from the threat of being incarcerated for refusal to testify against their perpetrators. Domestic violence victims, like many sexual assault victims, are victimized by perpetrators they know, and experience similar psychological trauma and fear of retribution from the abuser or the abuser's family members.

I encourage domestic violence victim advocates and law enforcement officials to continue to collaborate on this important issue and improve public safety.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger